

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-11

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R 181618 Z JUN 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SUVA

UNCLAS STATE 118135

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRN, FJ

SUBJ: CIVAIR - IMPORTATION OF ANTI- HIJACKING EQUIPMENT

1. AMERICAN AIRLINES HAS INFORMED FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) THAT IT HAS DELIVERED MAGNETOMETER (ELECTRONIC METAL DETECTING DEVICE) TO NADI FOR USE IN PRESCREENING PASSENGERS PURSUANT TO FAA REGULATIONS TO DETER HIJACKINGS. AMERICAN REPORTS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY FIJI CUSTOMS OFFICIALS THAT MAGNETOMETER WILL BE ADMITTED ONLY IF SOME 55 PERCENT DUTY (ABOUT 950 DOLLARS) IS PAID OR, ALTERNATIVELY, IF AMERICAN POSTS BOND AND SIGNS AGREEMENT TO REMOVE MAGNETOMETER FROM COUNTRY WITHIN ONE YEAR OF IMPORTATION.

2. YOU MAY RECALL (DEPT A-3, JAN 1973) THAT FAA REGULATIONS, WHICH BECAME EFFECTIVE JAN. 5, 1973 REQUIRE UNCLASSIFIED

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US AIR CARRIERS TO PERFORM PREFLIGHT ANTI- HIJACKING INSPECTIONS OF ALL PASSENGERS ON ALL FLIGHTS AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE MAGNETOMETER IN QUESTION IS TO BE USED IN THE REQUIRED PRESCREENING CHECKS AND IS, THEREFORE, TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED BY THE US AIR CARRIER TO CONFORM ITS OPERATION TO US GOVERNMENT LEGAL REQUIREMENT.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD APPROACH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TO DETERMINE IF IT NOT POSSIBLE UNDER TERMS OF US/ UK AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (ARTICLE 3) CURRENTLY IN EFFECT IN FIJI TO PERMIT FREE ENTRY OF MAGNETOMETER. MAY ALSO NOTE THAT LARGE NUMBER OF STATES, INCLUDING US, FOLLOW CLOSELY RECOMMENDED PRACTICE IN ANNEX (9)(FACILITATION) PARA 4.30 TO CHICAGO CONVENTION OF 1944 (ICAO CONVENTION) TO PERMIT FREE ENTRY OF BROAD RANGE OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT, GROUND HANDLING ITEMS (STAIRWAYS, ETC) AND PASSENGER HANDLING NEEDS (SCALES FOR WEIGHING BAGGAGE, ETC) USED BY AIR CARRIERS IN PROVIDING AGREED UPON SERVICES. FAILING AGREEMENT OF FREE ENTRY, POSSIBILITY OF INDEFINITE PERIOD FOR ENTRY UNDER BOND FOR AS LONG AS IT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE TO USE MAGNETOMETERS SHOULD BE SOUGHT.

4. IN MAKING APPROACH, EMBASSY MAY POINT OUT WE CONSIDER, AND BELIEVE HOST GOVERNMENT WOULD AGREE, IT WOULD BE IN PARAMOUNT INTEREST OF ALL CONCERNED (TRAVELERS, AIR CARRIERS, AND GOVERNMENTS) TO FACILITATE ENTRY OF THIS SMALL AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT TO BE USED IN EFFORT TO DETER HIJACKING AND THUS IMPROVE SAFETY OF INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT. ROGERS

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